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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000258

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2007  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PL](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW DEFMIN ALEKSANDER SZCZYGL0, A LOYAL  
PRESIDENTIAL INSIDER

REF: A. 06 WARSAW 1630

[1](#)B. WARSAW 247

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Classified By: Polcouns Mary T. Curtin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: 44-year-old Aleksander Szczyglo, Head of the Presidential Chancellery and a loyal protege and confidante of President Lech Kaczynski (Ref A), will succeed Radek Sikorski (Ref B) February 7 as Poland's Minister of Defense. By acknowledging Sikorski's concerns over the control of military intelligence and asking for Sikorski's continued assistance in Missile Defense negotiations, Szczyglo has given a promising first indication of professionalism and continuity. A member of the Kaczynski inner circle, Szczyglo appears to be a follower rather than someone who will initiate policy in his own right. Also, his earlier calls for continued conscription "to instill an appropriate sense of patriotism" indicate that he shares Kaczynski's aversion to proposals for streamlining the Polish military as part of overall defense reform and restructuring. Szczyglo's loyalty to President Kaczynski should mean continued support for presidential objectives. END SUMMARY

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Recent Reflections of Szczyglo's Character  
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[1](#)2. (C) Szczyglo has expressed a great sense of responsibility for the post entrusted to him. Describing his hesitancy to accept PM Jarek Kaczynski's February 5th nomination he remarked, "Every responsible man hesitates in a situation in which he bears significant responsibility for the lives of other men." Szczyglo promised that his first act would be to investigate the state of preparations for Poland's deployment to Afghanistan, an apparent nod to the concern Sikorski expressed at his farewell press conference, that MOD's lack of control over military intelligence was hindering his ability to ensure adequate protection for Polish troops serving abroad and contributed to his decision to resign. Despite media reports indicating that Sikorski and he had clashed, Szczyglo expressed gracious respect for his predecessor, and suggested a degree of policy continuity, when he asked for Sikorski's help with Missile Defense negotiations.

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Szczyglo's Biography  
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13. (U) Prior to his appointment, Aleksander Marek Szczyglo had served as Head of the Presidential Chancellery since August 2, 2006. During the official swearing in for that job, President Lech Kaczynski emphasized that he had known Szczyglo for many years and called him "one of my closest friends and co-workers." Szczyglo had previously been Deputy DefMin since December 23, 2005, overseeing social policy and the military intelligence services. He is a member of the ruling Law and Justice party (PiS), serving his second four-year term in parliament. In the previous parliament (2001-2005), Szczyglo was Deputy Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs and also sat on the Committee for Constitutional Accountability.

14. (U) For several months prior to his election to Parliament in 2001, Szczyglo was an advisor to the Chairman of the Management Board of PKO BP Bank. From 1997 to 2000, he worked as a department director in the European Integration Committee (UKIE). From January to October of 1997, Szczyglo served as Advisor to the Chief Inspector of the Main Labor Inspectorate, and he worked 1992-1995 as Chief of Cabinet to the Chairman of the Supreme Audit Chamber (NIK) when Lech Kaczynski held that office. Szczyglo worked 1991-1992 in the National Security Bureau, and 1990-1991 in the legal office of the Solidarity's National Committee.

15. (U) Aleksander Szczyglo graduated in 1990 from the Law and Administration Department of Gdansk University, where he was a favorite student of then-Professor Lech Kaczynski. Szczyglo completed postgraduate studies in administration at the University of Wisconsin in 1996. He was born October 27, 1963 in Jeziorany in the northeast of Poland. Szczyglo is single, although press reports about his nomination recalled that in the past he has been seen in public with Elzbieta

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Kruk, another long-time Lech Kaczynski confidante who is now head of the National Radio and Television Council (KRRiT) and is also single.

16. (C) Szczyglo resembles Lech Kaczynski in temperament - quiet and reserved. In meetings with foreign diplomats, he sometimes can be stiff and taciturn. He speaks with the intensity and conviction of a committed Solidarity activist and ardent anti-Communist. When discussing military reforms soon after the PiS government took office, Szczyglo returned again and again to the theme of "purging" the military of all vestiges of the pre-1989 Communist era, echoing the overall PiS approach. While at MOD, Szczyglo also advocated continued and even broadened military conscription -- notwithstanding the Defense Minister's public goal of moving to an all professional force -- as a means to "educate the youth of our nation and instill an appropriate sense of patriotism."

17. (C) Aleksander Szczyglo is clearly a close confidante of Lech Kaczynski. Whether he has a similarly close political relationship with PM Jaroslaw Kaczynski is not clear. Szczyglo is regarded as intensely loyal to Lech, who has been his mentor both academically and professionally. According to the media, Szczyglo is one of the few people in Poland whom the extremely private and reserved Lech Kaczynski allows to address him by his first name - and reportedly he can walk into the President's office any time he wants.

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No Indication of Policy Changes, So Far  
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18. (C) COMMENT. Although in the inner circle, Szczyglo seems less an initiator of policy than a loyal supporter. We do not expect Szczyglo to have a significant impact on the

direction of Polish foreign and defense policy - he is more likely to focus on implementing promises already made by the Kaczynskis such as Poland's commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan. END COMMENT  
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